Save Energy

Despite our best efforts, a lot of energy is still wasted imperceptibly. We insulate our homes, install high efficiency boilers and buy low energy light bulbs. But it doesn't end there as far as electrical consumption is concerned. Many other items in the home consume electrical power, but here we concentrate on mains adapters (also called 'wall cubes' or 'battery eliminators'). Take a good look around the house to see how many you have, and you could soon find about ten of them: phone charger(s), battery chargers, mini-vac, telephone, answering machine, the radio in the kitchen, modem, and so on. The disadvantage of these adapters is that they easily consume from 1 to 2.5 W under no load, without you getting anything in return (apart from some heat, of course). When five mains adapters are in use, each consuming 2 W, they'll take one kilowatt-hour every 100 hours, at a cost of 7 p. And 100 hours amounts to only 4 days! In a year, this is 87.6 times as much, or a bit over £6 per year. And if ten adapters are in use this amounts to over £12.

Something can be done about this, of course. The simplest way is to switch off all adapters when they are not in use. Most of you do this already, surely. There are probably a few adapters that have to remain switched on at all times though. There is an alternative for these as well: take a look at those modern switched-mode adapters! They no longer have a bulky transformer, just a switched-mode supply. They are (unfortunately) a bit more expensive, but tend to be smaller and give a better regulated output voltage. The quiescent power consumption of these adapters really is very small.

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